

Ontario Health Coalition

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Attention: Assignment Editor

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Hospital Announcement Largely to Cover Severance: Process Terrible for Patients

Toronto - The Ontario Health Coalition reacted to the government's hospital funding announcement by warning that almost half of the money announced is to be used for severance to cut hospital staff. The coalition expressed deep concern about the process that has culminated in today's announcement.

"It should be noted that almost half of the money announced today is to be used for severance," noted Corey Vermey, coalition spokesperson. "The last time this was tried by the Conservative government, it resulted in severe staffing shortages. It is equally short-sighted today."

"We are extremely concerned about the precedent set by the province and hospitals who have delineated services that they call "core" and "clinical", with the implication that other services may be treated as secondary. Under the Canada Health Act *all* medically necessary hospital services are to be covered, not only those that are politically expedient," warned Ethel Meade, coalition co chair. "Good patient care absolutely relies upon a clean hospital, decent food, and access unimpeded by user fees that are a barrier to the poor and elderly. We are concerned that patients are paying the price for exorbitant profit-taking by drug, supplies and technology companies."

"The negotiation process leading to this announcement has used as a political pawn access for patients to hospital services and treatments that are critical to our well-being," said Roy Brady coalition spokesperson. "Ultimately communities have had no input into decisions for which we pay and that intrinsically affect our lives. In any community where hospital boards and the province have agreed to cut staff, shed services or institute new user fees, they should be required to hold a public meeting to answer concerns from the community."

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